THE ROAD TO CIVIL WAR™

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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

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Kirkham
Leisten

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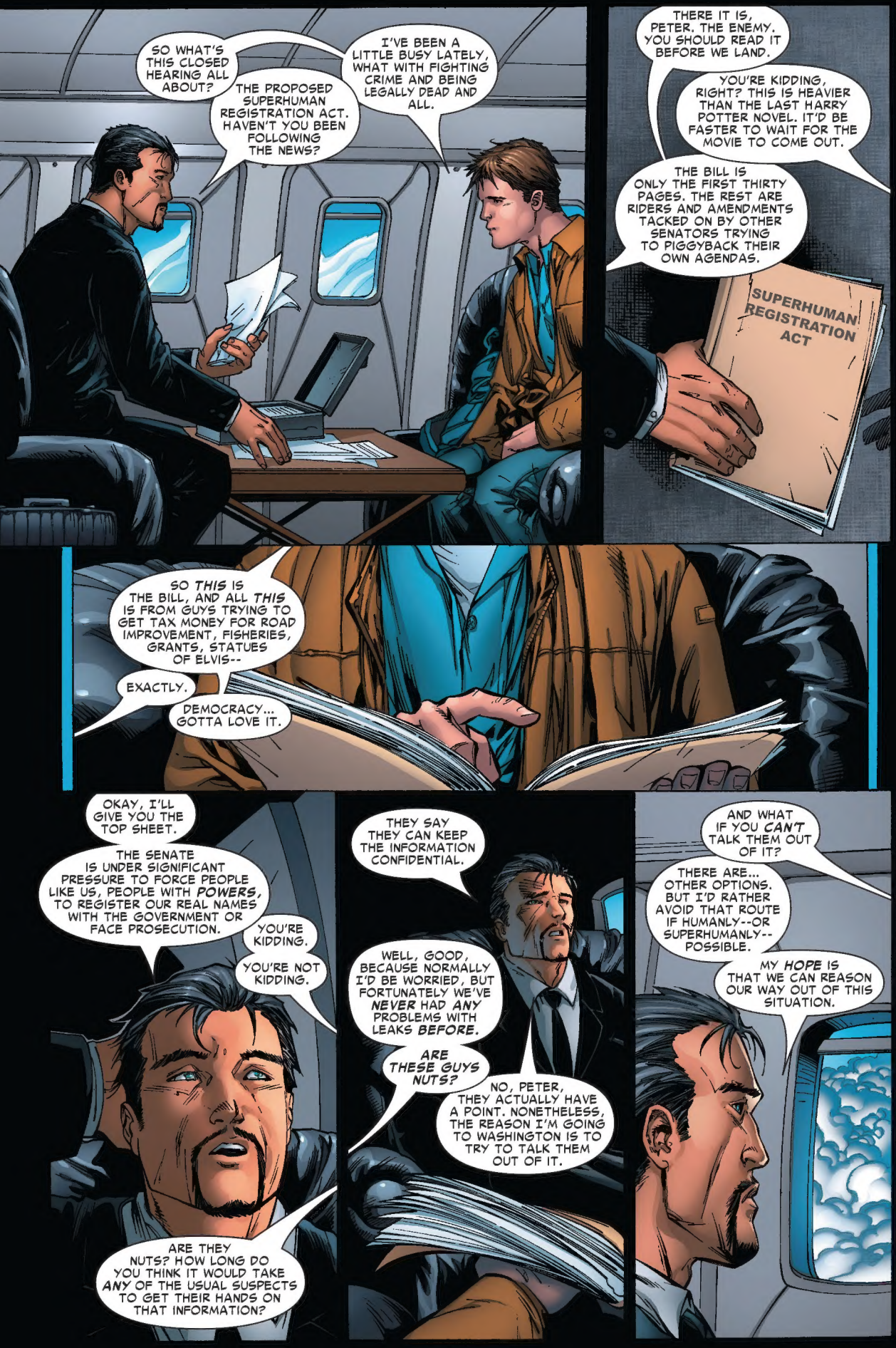
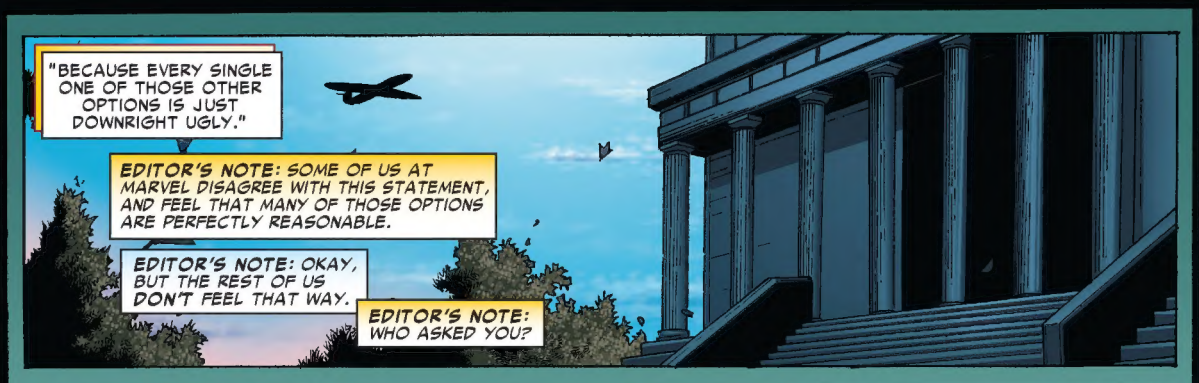
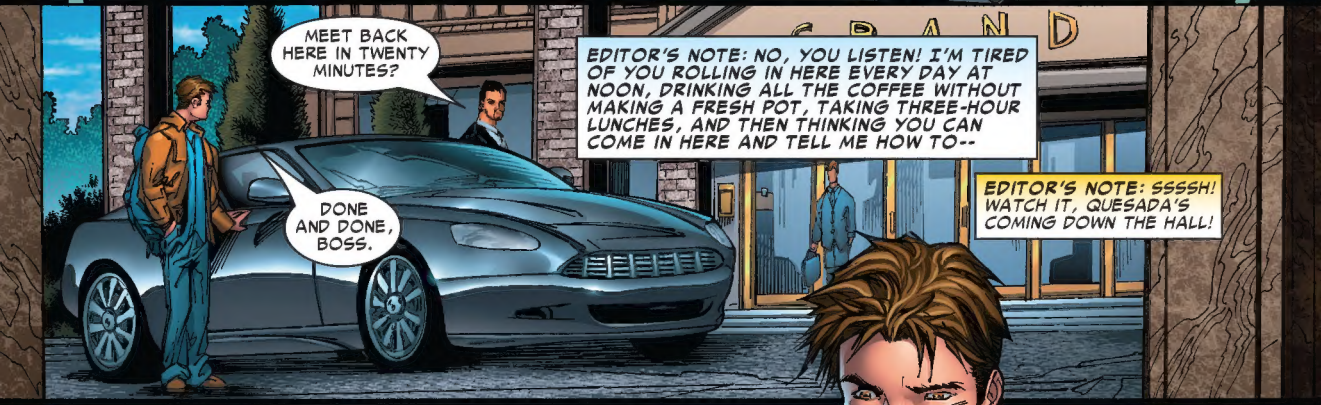
HEY BOSS... I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO GET SOME SLEEP.
I HAD A LAST-MINUTE MEETING TO ATTEND.
AT MIDNIGHT?
WE DON'T EXACTLY LIVE IN A NINE-TO-FIVE WORLD, PETER.
IT WAS--
SO WHAT WAS THE MEETING ABOUT?
"--A LONG-TERM PLANNING SESSION."
EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE THE NEW AVENGERS ILLUMINATI SPECIAL FOR MORE ABOUT THIS HIGHLY CLASSIFIED MEETING.
THAT'S YOUR WAY OF SAYING "SHUT UP, PETER" WITHOUT ACTUALLY HAVING TO SAY "SHUT UP, PETER," ISN'T IT?
YES.
BY THE WAY, I BROUGHT ALONG VERSION 2.0 OF YOUR UNIFORM. I MADE SOME MORE ADJUSTMENTS.
VERSION 2.0? BUT TONY, THE ONE I HAVE ISN'T EVEN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OLD YET.
ART IS NEVER FINISHED, PETER, ONLY ABANDONED.
"I BEGIN TO SEE WHY YOU'VE GONE THROUGH FORTY-SEVEN VERSIONS OF YOUR IRON MAN ARMOR."
"FORTY-NINE."
"WHATEVER."
Mr. Parker Goes to Washington
PART TWO OF THREE


SO WHAT'S THIS CLOSED HEARING ALL ABOUT?
THE PROPOSED SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT. HAVEN'T YOU BEEN FOLLOWING THE NEWS?
I'VE BEEN A LITTLE BUSY LATELY, WHAT WITH FIGHTING CRIME AND BEING LEGALLY DEAD AND ALL.
THERE IT IS, PETER. THE ENEMY. YOU SHOULD READ IT BEFORE WE LAND.
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT? THIS IS HEAVIER THAN THE LAST HARRY POTTER NOVEL. IT'D BE FASTER TO WAIT FOR THE MOVIE TO COME OUT.
THE BILL IS ONLY THE FIRST THIRTY PAGES. THE REST ARE RIDERS AND AMENDMENTS TACKED ON BY OTHER SENATORS TRYING TO PIGGYBACK THEIR OWN AGENDAS.
SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT
SO THIS IS THE BILL, AND ALL THIS IS FROM GUYS TRYING TO GET TAX MONEY FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT, FISHERIES, GRANTS, STATUES OF ELVIS--
EXACTLY.
DEMOCRACY... GOTTA LOVE IT.
OKAY, I'LL GIVE YOU THE TOP SHEET.
THE SENATE IS UNDER SIGNIFICANT PRESSURE TO FORCE PEOPLE LIKE US, PEOPLE WITH POWERS, TO REGISTER OUR REAL NAMES WITH THE GOVERNMENT OR FACE PROSECUTION.
YOU'RE KIDDING.
YOU'RE NOT KIDDING.
ARE THEY NUTS? HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT WOULD TAKE ANY OF THE USUAL SUSPECTS TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THAT INFORMATION?
THEY SAY THEY CAN KEEP THE INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL.
WELL, GOOD, BECAUSE NORMALLY I'D BE WORRIED, BUT FORTUNATELY WE'VE NEVER HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH LEAKS BEFORE.
ARE THESE GUYS NUTS?
NO, PETER, THEY ACTUALLY HAVE A POINT. NONETHELESS, THE REASON I'M GOING TO WASHINGTON IS TO TRY TO TALK THEM OUT OF IT.
AND WHAT IF YOU CAN'T TALK THEM OUT OF IT?
THERE ARE... OTHER OPTIONS. BUT I'D RATHER AVOID THAT ROUTE IF HUMANLY--OR SUPERHUMANLY--POSSIBLE.
MY HOPE IS THAT WE CAN REASON OUR WAY OUT OF THIS SITUATION.





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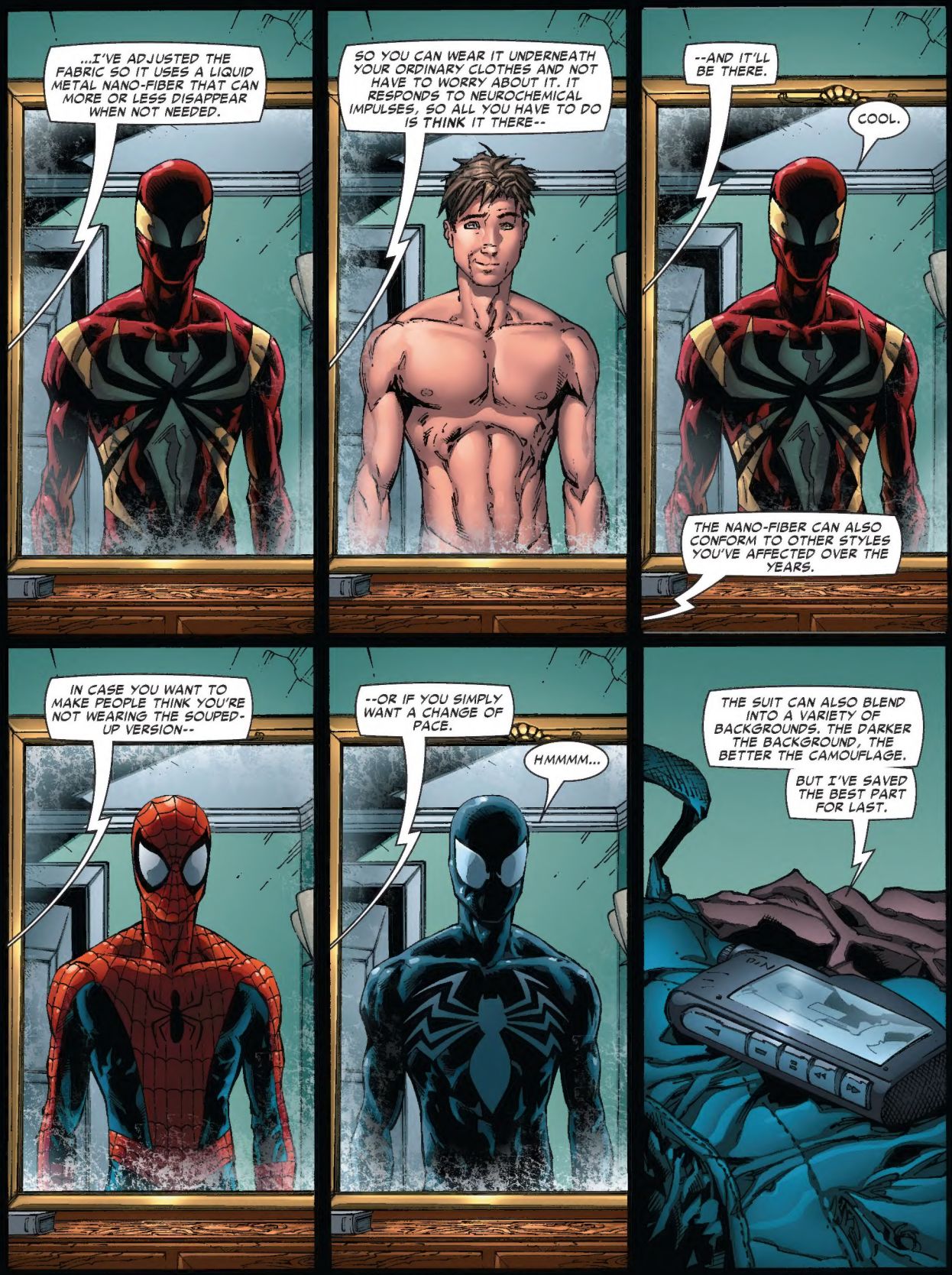
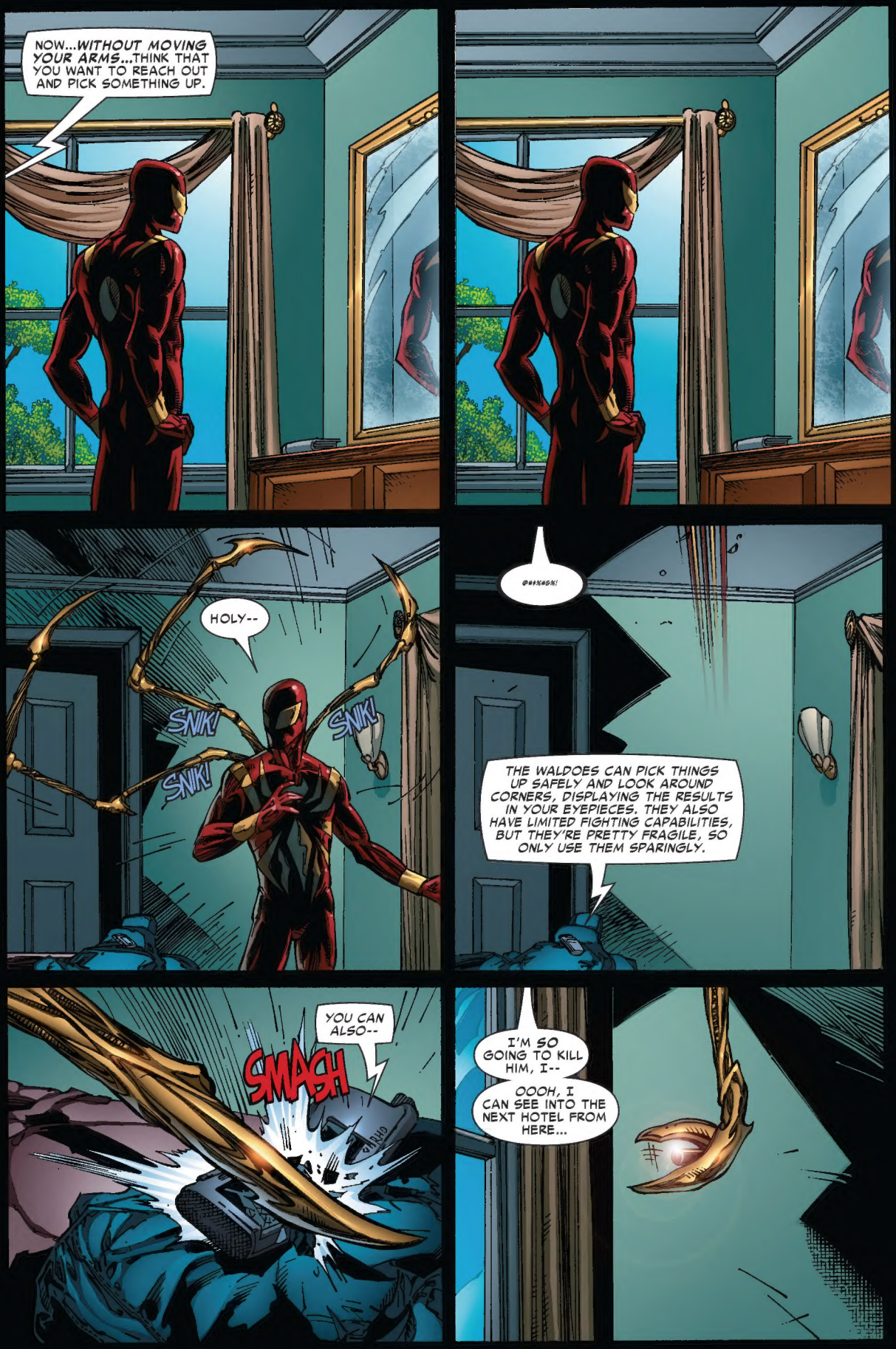
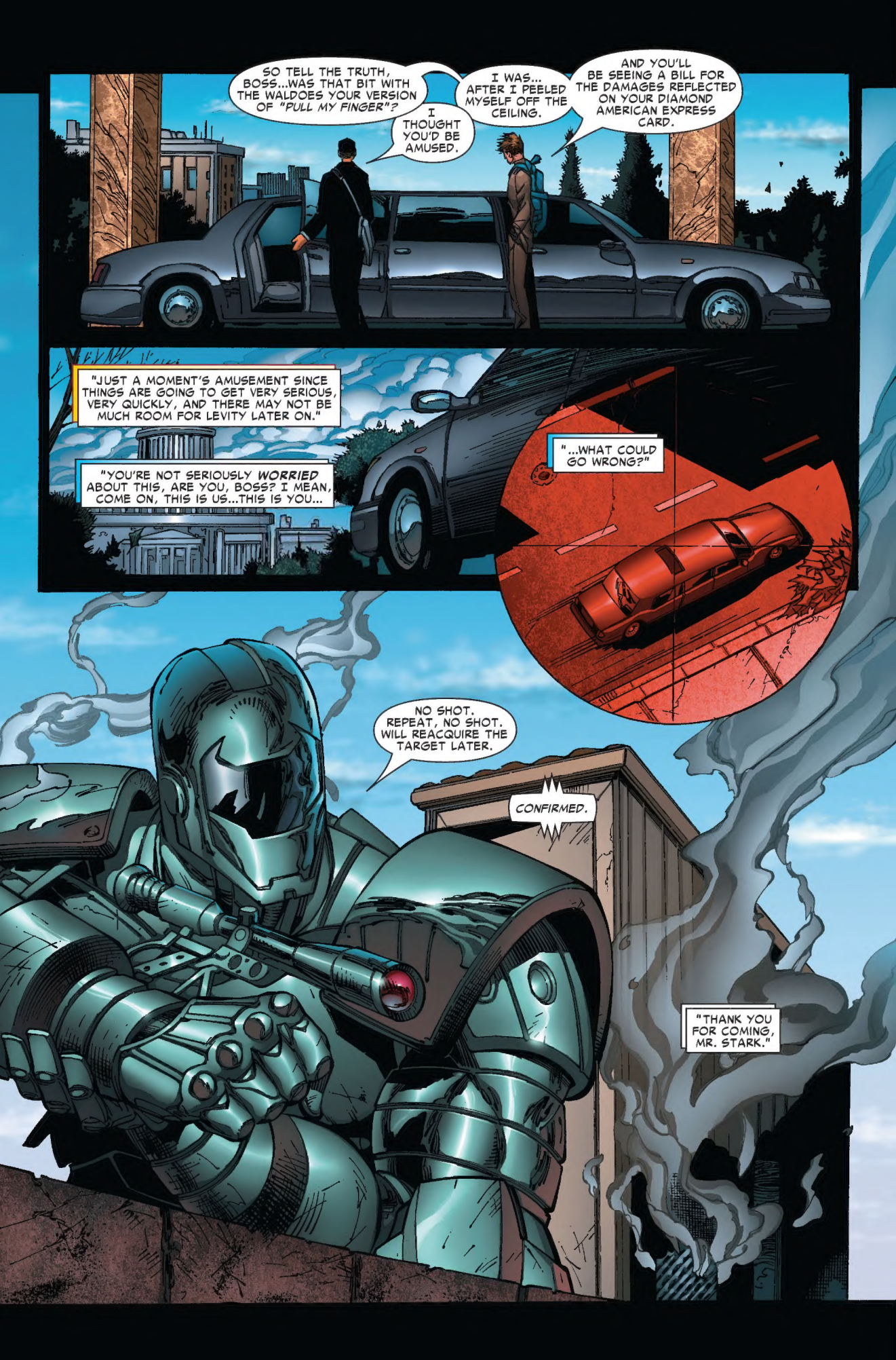

...I'VE ADJUSTED THE FABRIC SO IT USES A LIQUID METAL NANO-FIBER THAT CAN MORE OR LESS DISAPPEAR WHEN NOT NEEDED.
SO YOU CAN WEAR IT UNDERNEATH YOUR ORDINARY CLOTHES AND NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IT. IT RESPONDS TO NEUROCHEMICAL IMPULSES, SO ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS THINK IT THERE--
--AND IT'LL BE THERE.
COOL.
THE NANO-FIBER CAN ALSO CONFORM TO OTHER STYLES YOU'VE AFFECTED OVER THE YEARS.
IN CASE YOU WANT TO MAKE PEOPLE THINK YOU'RE NOT WEARING THE SOUPED-UP VERSION--
--OR IF YOU SIMPLY WANT A CHANGE OF PACE.
HMMMM...
THE SUIT CAN ALSO BLEND INTO A VARIETY OF BACKGROUNDS. THE DARKER THE BACKGROUND, THE BETTER THE CAMOUFLAGE.
BUT I'VE SAVED THE BEST PART FOR LAST.

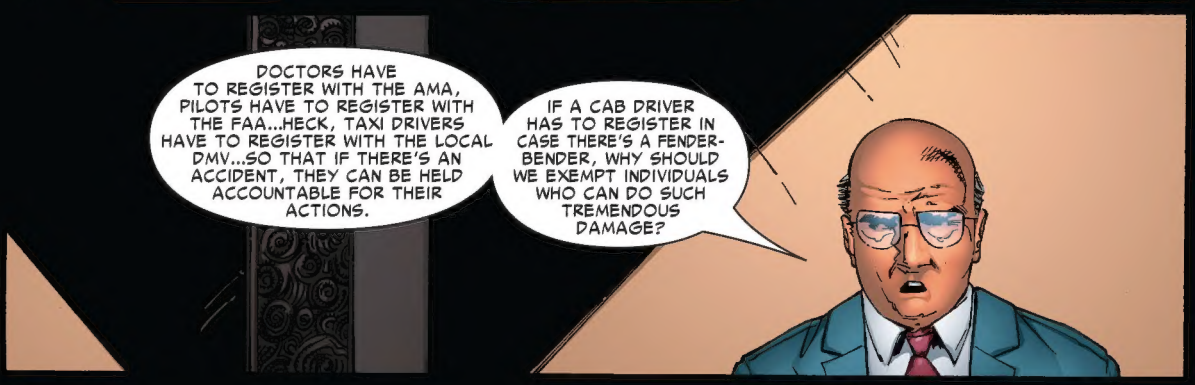

NOW...WITHOUT MOVING YOUR ARMS...THINK THAT YOU WANT TO REACH OUT AND PICK SOMETHING UP.
HOLY--
SNIK!
SNIK!
SNIK!
@#%&$%!
THE WALDOES CAN PICK THINGS UP SAFELY AND LOOK AROUND CORNERS, DISPLAYING THE RESULTS IN YOUR EYEPIECES. THEY ALSO HAVE LIMITED FIGHTING CAPABILITIES, BUT THEY'RE PRETTY FRAGILE, SO ONLY USE THEM SPARINGLY.
YOU CAN ALSO--
SMASH
I'M SO GOING TO KILL HIM, I--
OOOH, I CAN SEE INTO THE NEXT HOTEL FROM HERE...


SO TELL THE TRUTH, BOSS...WAS THAT BIT WITH THE WALDOES YOUR VERSION OF "PULL MY FINGER"?
I THOUGHT YOU'D BE AMUSED.
I WAS... AFTER I PEELED MYSELF OFF THE CEILING.
AND YOU'LL BE SEEING A BILL FOR THE DAMAGES REFLECTED ON YOUR DIAMOND AMERICAN EXPRESS CARD.
"JUST A MOMENT'S AMUSEMENT SINCE THINGS ARE GOING TO GET VERY SERIOUS, VERY QUICKLY, AND THERE MAY NOT BE MUCH ROOM FOR LEVITY LATER ON."
"YOU'RE NOT SERIOUSLY WORRIED ABOUT THIS, ARE YOU, BOSS? I MEAN, COME ON, THIS IS US...THIS IS YOU...
"...WHAT COULD GO WRONG?"
NO SHOT. REPEAT, NO SHOT. WILL REACQUIRE THE TARGET LATER.
CONFIRMED.
"THANK YOU FOR COMING, MR. STARK."

WE ARE HONORED TO HAVE YOU HERE TODAY, BOTH IN YOUR ROLE AS AN INDUSTRIALIST, A FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, AND, OF COURSE, AS IRON MAN.
YES, OF COURSE, WHAT WAS I THINKING?
FORMER IRON MAN, SENATOR DICKERSON.
OH, WAIT, I KNOW WHAT I WAS THINKING.
I WAS WONDERING IF YOU WOULD GIVE THAT SAME ANSWER IF YOU WERE UNDER OATH, WHICH CARRIES WITH IT THE PENALTY OF PERJURY?
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT, MR. STARK?
I SAY...
...THAT THE SENATOR CAN PUT ME UNDER OATH IF HE SO WISHES. BUT THAT WAS NOT THE UNDERSTANDING WHEN I WAS ASKED TO APPEAR HERE. IF I AM TO TESTIFY UNDER OATH, THEN WE'LL HAVE TO RECESS UNTIL I CAN BRING IN COUNSEL TO APPEAR WITH ME.
THAT IS STANDARD PROTOCOL WHEN SPEAKING UNDER OATH, IS IT NOT?
SO THIS YOUNG MAN IS NOT COUNSEL?
NO, SIR. THIS IS PETER PARKER, AN ASSOCIATE AT STARK INDUSTRIES, WHO I HIRED FOR BOTH HIS SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE AND HIS WORK AS A PHOTOJOURNALIST CHRONICLING A NUMBER OF POWERED HEROES OVER THE YEARS.
UHMMM... HI.
YOU'LL SPEAK WHEN YOU'RE SPOKEN TO, SON.
YESSIR.
WELL, NEXT TIME, THEN, I SUPPOSE.
BECAUSE I THINK IT VERY LIKELY THAT THERE WILL BE A NEXT TIME, MR. STARK.
BUT IN THE MEANTIME, LET'S PROCEED.
THE CHAIR RECOGNIZES SENATOR WHITMORE.

MR. STARK, THE PRESENCE WITHIN THE UNITED STATES OF SUPERHUMANS, OR SUPER HEROES, AS SOME CALL THEM, WAS MOST PRONOUNCED IN THE YEARS AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR, STARTING AROUND 1946.
"THESE INDIVIDUALS, OPERATING IN DISGUISE, THEIR IDENTITIES UNKNOWN, FREQUENTLY ENGAGED IN BRUTAL CONFLICTS IN WHICH SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE WAS DONE TO LIFE AND PROPERTY."
MR. STARK, ACCORDING TO OUR BEST ESTIMATES, FROM 1946 TO THE PRESENT, SUCH BATTLES HAVE INCURRED ALMOST TWO HUNDRED BILLION DOLLARS IN DAMAGES... COSTS THAT LOCAL AND FEDERAL AGENCIES HAVE BEEN FORCED TO ABSORB BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW WHO ELSE TO BILL FOR THE EXPENSES.
LET ME REPEAT THAT NUMBER, MR. STARK. TWO HUNDRED BILLION DOLLARS.
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT NUMBER?
MY RESPONSE TO THAT NUMBER...IS ANOTHER NUMBER.
FORTY-SEVEN.
FORTY-SEVEN.
FORTY-SEVEN WHAT?
FORTY-SEVEN OCCASIONS ON WHICH SUPER HEROES PREVENTED THE ENTIRE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT FROM BEING VAPORIZED, CONQUERED OR NUKED BACK INTO THE STONE AGE.
THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BUDGET FOR 2006 ALONE IS 419 BILLION DOLLARS.
TWO HUNDRED BILLION, OVER SIXTY YEARS, IS THREE HUNDRED MILLION PER YEAR. THAT'S LESS THAN THE PENTAGON SPENT JUST THIS YEAR ON CERAMIC BODY ARMOR.
FOR SAVING THE ENTIRE NATION, FORTY-SEVEN TIMES OVER.
I THINK WE'RE GETTING OFF CHEAP, SENATOR.

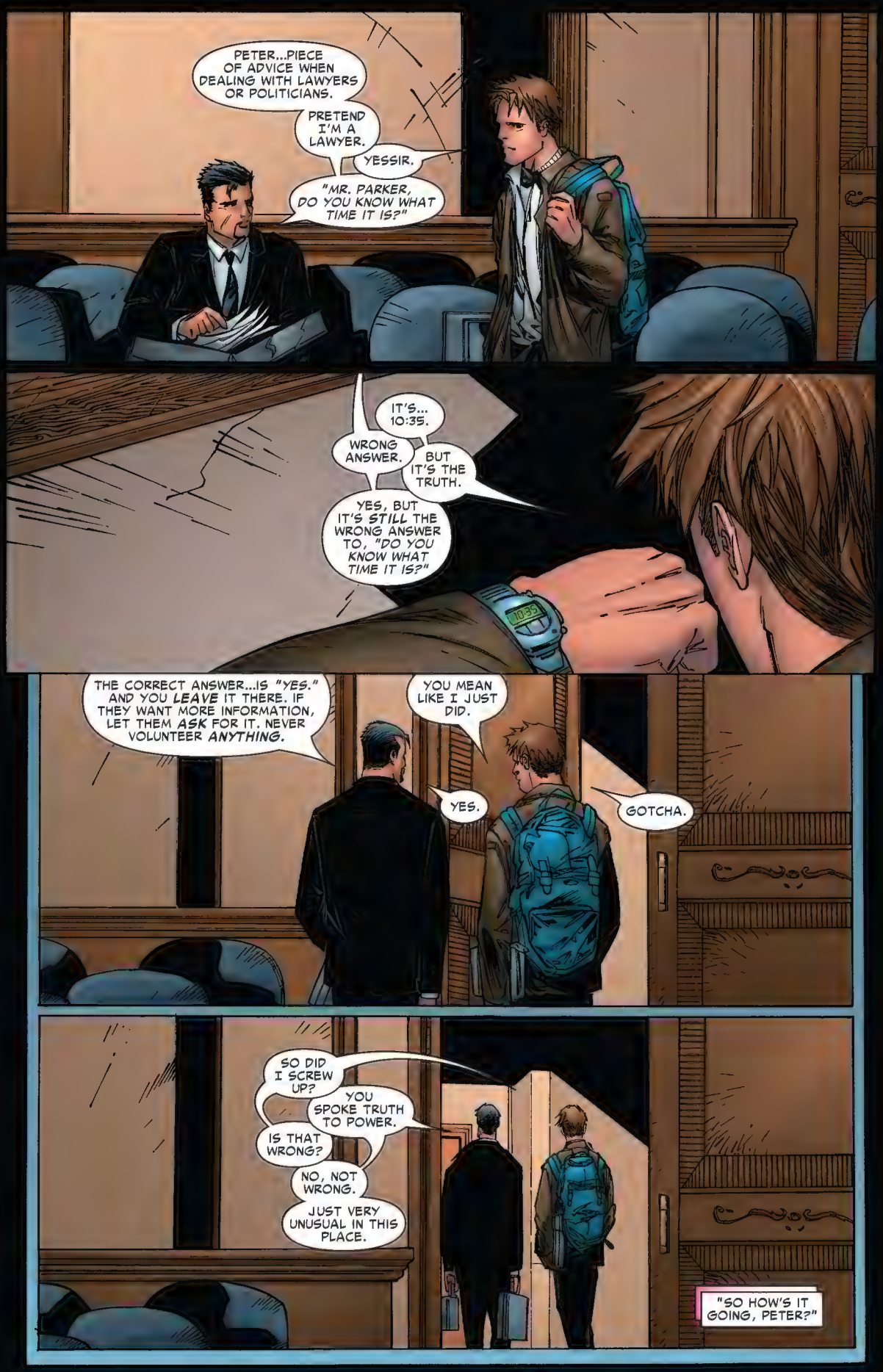
THAT'S A VERY PRETTY SPEECH, MR. STARK, BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY ADDRESS THE POINT. WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES, DON'T WE?
YES, SIR.
SO THESE SELF-PROCLAIMED HEROES ALSO MAKE MISTAKES?
YES, SIR.
AND DON'T YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THOSE MISTAKES?


DOCTORS HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE AMA, PILOTS HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE FAA...HECK, TAXI DRIVERS HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE LOCAL DMV...SO THAT IF THERE'S AN ACCIDENT, THEY CAN BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.
IF A CAB DRIVER HAS TO REGISTER IN CASE THERE'S A FENDER-BENDER, WHY SHOULD WE EXEMPT INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN DO SUCH TREMENDOUS DAMAGE?

WELL, MR. STARK? DO YOU HAVE AN ANSWER FOR THAT?
NO, SENATOR. I'M AFRAID I DON'T.

DOES ANYONE OBJECT TO HEARING FROM MR. PORKER--
PARKER.
--FROM MR. PARKER?
VERY WELL, GO AHEAD.
I DON'T HAVE THE WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE MR. STARK HAS IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE WITH GREAT POWERS, BUT IN MY LIMITED EXPOSURE...WELL...
SEE, GREAT POWER... ALSO BRINGS WITH IT A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY, TO--
I'M NOT DOING THIS VERY WELL. SO LET ME TRY THIS.
THERE'S THIS THING CALLED THE DOCTRINE OF PROPORTIONATE RESPONSE. THE BIGGER THE BAD GUY, THE BIGGER THE GOOD GUY YOU NEED TO STOP HIM.
THE BAD GUYS ARE BAD GUYS MOST OF THE TIME. BUT THE GOOD GUYS...ARE ONLY BEING THE GOOD GUYS... PART-TIME.
"THEY HAVE LIVES, AND FAMILIES, AND LOVED ONES WHO WOULD BE AT TERRIBLE RISK TO THESE VERY SAME BAD GUYS IF THEIR IDENTITIES WERE REVEALED.
"IN THOSE PERSONAL MOMENTS, THEY OR THEIR FAMILIES COULD BE HARMED...BECAUSE THE BAD GUYS KNOW THAT IF THEY WIPE OUT OR NEUTRALIZE ENOUGH OF THE SUPER HEROES...
"...THERE WON'T BE ANYONE WHO CAN STOP THEM THE 48TH TIME THIS COUNTRY IS IN JEOPARDY."
POLICE OFFICERS, PROSECUTORS, JUDGES, EVEN ELECTED OFFICIALS AND THEIR FAMILIES FACE SIMILAR THREATS EVERY DAY, MR. PARKER. WHAT KEEPS OUR DEMOCRACY HONEST IS THAT WE DON'T OPERATE BEHIND MASKS.
I KNOW...

"...BUT ALL THOSE PEOPLE ASPIRED TO THOSE JOBS. MOST SUPER HEROES NEVER ASKED FOR THESE POWERS, NEVER WANTED THEM. BUT ONCE THEY HAD THEM--
"--THEY KNEW THAT THEY HAD TO DO WHAT WAS RIGHT IN A SYSTEM THAT WOULD NEVER ALLOW THEM TO OPERATE OPENLY.
"THEY'RE TRYING TO HELP, SENATOR."
BUT IF THAT'S TRUE, WOULDN'T IT BE SIMPLER IF THEY COULD REGISTER, PRIVATELY AND SECURELY, WITH AN AGENCY THAT WOULD THEN ALLOW THEM TO DO WHAT YOU DESCRIBE OPENLY AND LEGALLY?
IF YOU WERE, SAY, ANT-MAN, WOULDN'T IT BE A COMFORT TO YOU TO KNOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE POLICE WERE YOUR ALLY, NOT YOUR ENEMY?
IF ANYTHING, YOU MAY HAVE JUST MADE THE MOST COMPELLING CASE OF ALL FOR JUST THE KIND OF REGISTRATION WE'RE DEBATING HERE TODAY.
DON'T YOU AGREE?
I--
--PROBABLY SHOULDN'T SAY ANYTHING ELSE.
I AGREE.
THEN I SUGGEST A TEN-MINUTE RECESS.
BANG!

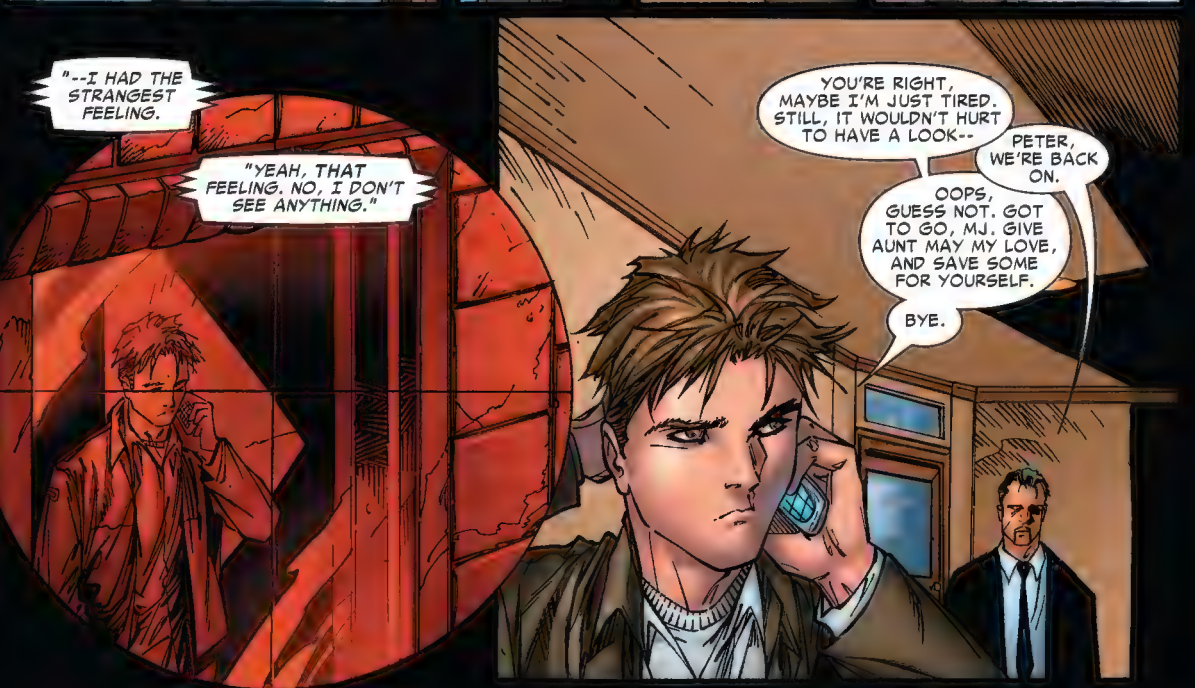

PETER...PIECE OF ADVICE WHEN DEALING WITH LAWYERS OR POLITICIANS.
PRETEND I'M A LAWYER.
YESSIR.
"MR. PARKER, DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?"
IT'S... 10:35.
WRONG ANSWER.
BUT IT'S THE TRUTH.
YES, BUT IT'S STILL THE WRONG ANSWER TO, "DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?"
THE CORRECT ANSWER...IS "YES." AND YOU LEAVE IT THERE. IF THEY WANT MORE INFORMATION, LET THEM ASK FOR IT. NEVER VOLUNTEER ANYTHING.
YOU MEAN LIKE I JUST DID.
YES.
GOTCHA.
SO DID I SCREW UP?
YOU SPOKE TRUTH TO POWER.
IS THAT WRONG?
NO, NOT WRONG.
JUST VERY UNUSUAL IN THIS PLACE.
"SO HOW'S IT GOING, PETER?"

IT'S GOING SWELL. IN FACT, IF IT WERE GOING ANY SWELLER, THEY'D PROBABLY HAVE TO DEPORT ME.
OH, DEAR. WHAT HAPPENED?
I OPENED MY MOUTH AND SPOKE WHEN I SHOULDN'T HAVE.

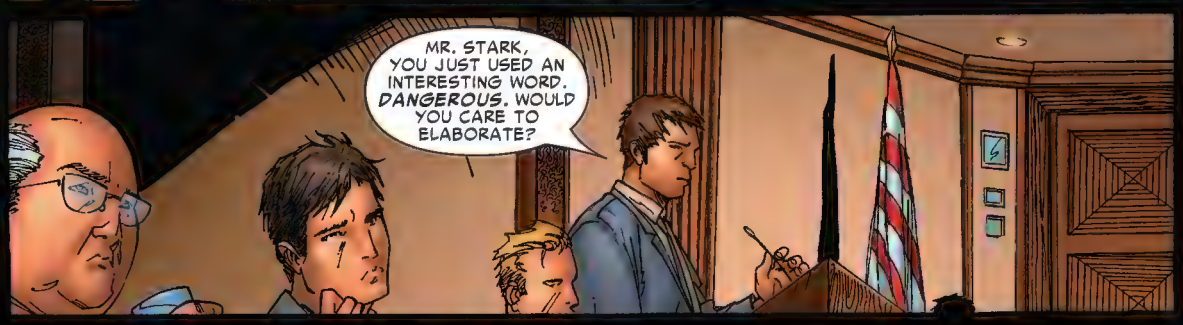
WELL, THAT'S NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE.
HEY!
JUST TRYING TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD, PETER. I'M SURE IT'S NOT AS BAD AS YOU THINK.

I DON'T KNOW...MAYBE. I JUST FEEL LIKE I'M IN WAY OVER MY HEAD. I MEAN, AT THE END OF THE DAY, I'M A KID FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD, THIS ISN'T MY KIND OF SCENE, I--

PETER? IS SOMETHING WRONG?
I'M NOT SURE, I JUST--


"--I HAD THE STRANGEST FEELING.
"YEAH, THAT FEELING. NO, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING."
YOU'RE RIGHT, MAYBE I'M JUST TIRED. STILL, IT WOULDN'T HURT TO HAVE A LOOK--
PETER, WE'RE BACK ON.
OOPS, GUESS NOT. GOT TO GO, MJ. GIVE AUNT MAY MY LOVE, AND SAVE SOME FOR YOURSELF.
BYE.

FOUR HOURS, FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...
--AND WHILE THERE ARE STILL PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED, THE SYSTEM OF ANONYMOUS, POWERED INDIVIDUALS SERVING THEIR COUNTRY HAS WORKED WELL FOR OVER SIXTY YEARS.
CHANGING THAT SYSTEM NOW WOULD ONLY CREATE A NEW AND POSSIBLY MORE DANGEROUS SERIES OF PROBLEMS.


MR. STARK, YOU JUST USED AN INTERESTING WORD. DANGEROUS. WOULD YOU CARE TO ELABORATE?

PROHIBITION NOT ONLY USHERED IN THE AGE OF ORGANIZED CRIME, IT TURNED ORDINARY CITIZENS INTO LAW-BREAKERS OVERNIGHT. THE SAME THING HAPPENED WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE FLED THE DRAFT DURING VIETNAM.
THIS ACT, IF PASSED, WOULD TURN MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE SERVED THIS COUNTRY AS PATRIOTS BUT REFUSE TO REGISTER...INTO CRIMINALS.
ONCE THAT HAPPENS, WHO KNOWS WHERE IT WILL END?

SOME MIGHT TAKE THAT AS A THREAT, MR. STARK. IS THAT HOW YOU MEAN IT? OR, TO PUT IT MORE PRECISELY--
--WHOSE SIDE WOULD YOU BE ON?

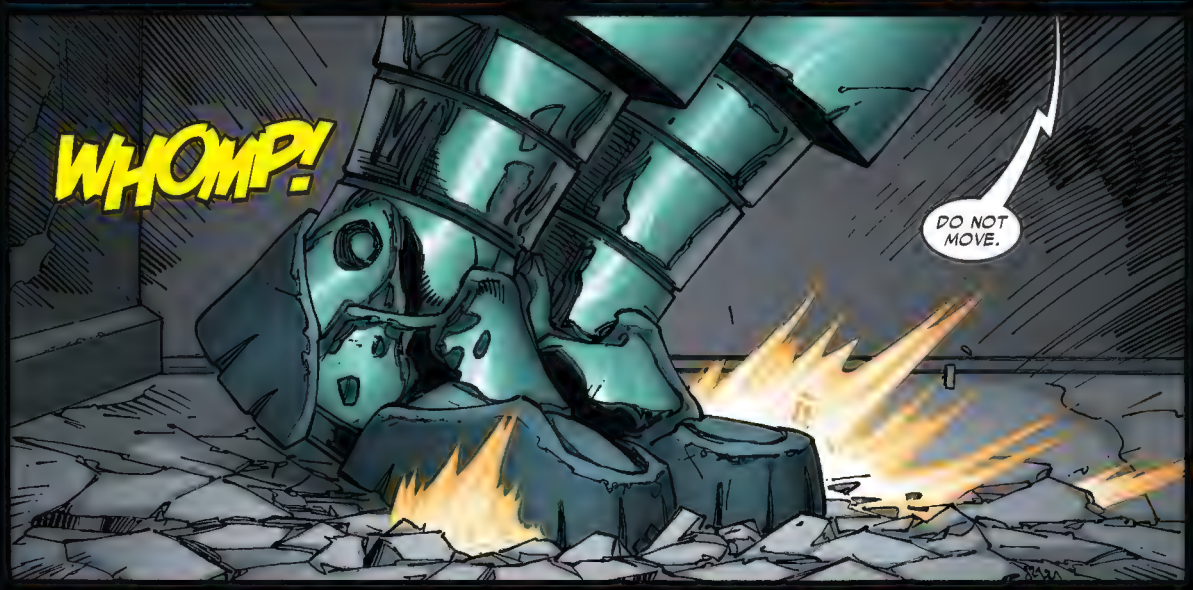
I HAVE ALWAYS SERVED AT THE PLEASURE OF MY COUNTRY, AND ITS LEADERS.
NOTHING IN THAT SENTENCE HAS CHANGED, OR WOULD EVER CHANGE.
THANK YOU FOR THE CLARIFICATION, MR. STARK.

THIS COMMITTEE IS RECESSED UNTIL TOMORROW AT NINE A.M. YOUR PRESENCE WILL STILL BE NEEDED, MR. STARK.
BANG!

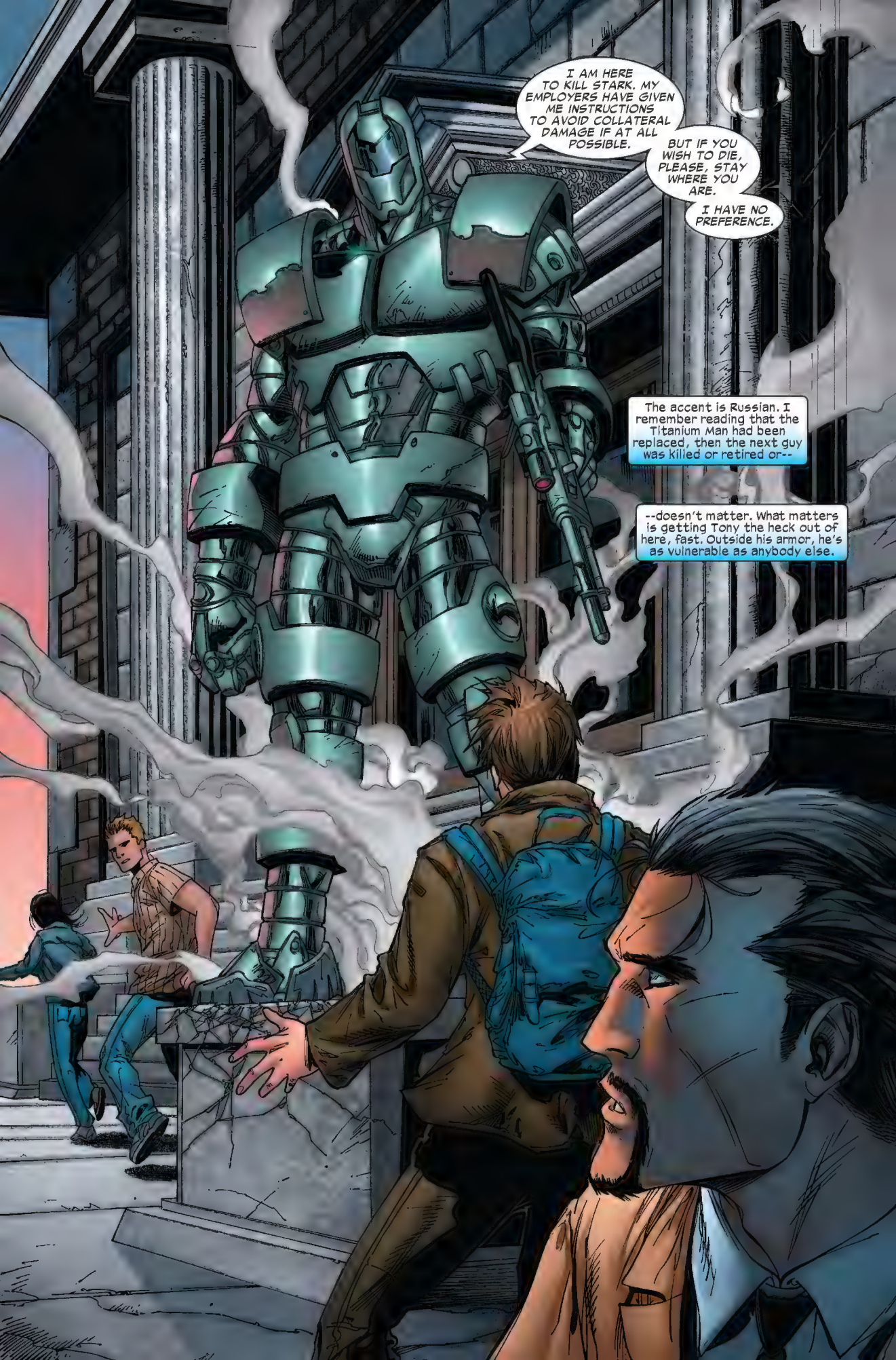
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DO IT, BOSS. I'D RATHER FACE AN ARMY OF BAD GUYS THAN HAVE TO GO BACK IN THERE AGAIN.
IT'S JUST SOMETHING YOU GET USED TO. AS YOU WILL, IN TIME. REMEMBER, YOU'RE MY RIGHT HAND NOW.
I THINK I'D RATHER BE A FOOT RIGHT NOW, TO TELL YOU THE--
MR. STARK!
MR. STARK! WE DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO BE HERE... IT'S NOT ON THE PUBLIC SCHEDULE--
IT WAS A PRIVATE SESSION, NOT A BIG DEAL, HARDLY WORTH MENTIONING.
WAS THIS THE COMMITTEE ON SUPERHUMAN AFFAIRS? DO YOU THINK THEY'RE GOING TO PASS THE REGISTRATION ACT?
THE COMMITTEE AND I HAD A GOOD MEETING, AND WE DISCUSSED SOME OPTIONS THAT, AS FAR AS I KNOW, ARE STILL JUST THAT... OPTIONS.
COME ON, PETER...WE HAVE PLACES TO BE.
RIGHT, BOSS.
SO WHERE ARE WE GOING NOW?
SOME PLACE WITH A STEAK.
OH, I THOUGHT...I MEAN, THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A GOOD CHANCE FOR US TO GET THE WORD OUT TO PEOPLE, I MEAN MOST OF THEM LIKE--
--WHAT WE--
--DO.
DOWN!

PTING!

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE, BOSS, GOT TO--


WHOMP!
DO NOT MOVE.

GREAT...
...IT'S THE TITANIUM MAN.


I AM HERE TO KILL STARK. MY EMPLOYERS HAVE GIVEN ME INSTRUCTIONS TO AVOID COLLATERAL DAMAGE IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.
BUT IF YOU WISH TO DIE, PLEASE, STAY WHERE YOU ARE.
I HAVE NO PREFERENCE.
The accent is Russian. I remember reading that the Titanium Man had been replaced, then the next guy was killed or retired or--
--doesn't matter. What matters is getting Tony the heck out of here, fast. Outside his armor, he's as vulnerable as anybody else.

Me...I don't have that problem.
TONY... GO!
WHAT--?
CAN'T SEE--
THERE!
NOW TO FINISH THIS.
THAT'S FUNNY--
--I WAS THINKING EXACTLY THE SAME THING.
COSMIC, HUH?

THIS IS NOT YOUR CONCERN.
SHRAKKK!
CONCERNED? I'M NOT CONCERNED.
I DO THIS FOR FUN.
MY MOM SAID IT WAS THIS OR A NEWSPAPER ROUTE, SO I--
OOOOOF!
WELL, YES, I DID WANT TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION, BUT STILL--
OW.

I DO NOT HAVE TIME FOR THIS.
YOU'VE =UNF= GOT THAT RIGHT, BORIS.
IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, THINGS ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT AROUND WASHINGTON THESE DAYS, AND--
THERE THEY ARE! THE RADIO REPORTS WERE RIGHT!
SPIDER-MAN AND SOME GUY ARE ATTACKING THE SENATE BUILDING!
SONOFA--

K-TANG!

DOES IT LOOK LIKE WE'RE PALS, PAL? HUH? I--
OPEN FIRE!
UH-OH--
WHOOOAAAA!
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE POINTING THOSE THINGS, WOULDJA?
OH, NO YOU DON'T.
FWIP!

THIS ISN'T OVER, BUDDY. THIS FIGHT--
--IS JUST STARTING.